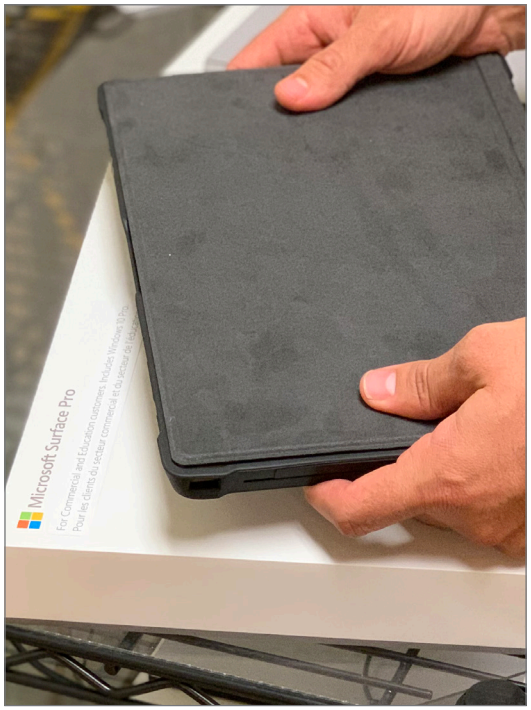
Microsoft Partner Success Story:

Data Impressions, Tech Data, and Tustin Unified School District



How collaboration raised the grade for the digital classroom

Since 1979, the Data Impressions subsidiary of DI Technology Group Inc. has been striving to provide the best technology solutions to government, education, and corporations. In 2019, its mettle was put to the test with a collaborative venture that aimed to redefine what was possible in the digital classroom. By joining forces with the distributor Tech Data and the Microsoft Education Team, the Data Impressions team was able to propose and execute an ambitious device deployment in the high schools of Southern California's Tustin District.

Creating a convincing business case for the district was not easy. According to Greg Hunt, Chief Disruption Officer of Data Impressions

> Tustin is very much on the leading edge."

"These are high school kids who are working on satellites—some of those are currently in space, I think—and so those schools feel an immense accountability to the communities and the taxpayers who are helping them invest in their technology development. They're looking for the best possible device for the students, at the best possible price."

Understanding the expectations and needs of the educators and the students was a crucial starting point for Data Impressions. That, and an inspiring workshop on Autopilot that employees had previously attended with trusted distribution partners, Tech Data.

A is for Autopilot

The Tustin high school teachers and IT managers that Data Impressions were looking to reach had three major priorities. The first was to elevate their digital storytelling abilities in English, Mathematics, and Science. The second thing they wanted was a seamless device experience. They wanted to spend as little time as possible preparing and deploying the devices, instead of wasting the few precious weeks of summer vacation that they had to coordinate a refresh. Finally, they wanted a vendor who was ready to act as trusted advisors for them.

The Data Impressions team knew they could commit to delivering unrivaled support. On its website, the company pledges ***"a commitment to excellence based upon a philosophy of integrity, knowledge, leadership, teamwork, and personalized service."*** The team was also confident that the Microsoft Surface family of devices had the ability to provide a limitless canvas for digital storytelling, which could be molded and tailored to accommodate very style of learning.

The only part of the puzzle they were missing was the promise of a streamlined delivery that would have students working productively from Day One.

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Thankfully, the Tech Data Autopilot session was a serendipitous discovery for the account team at Data Impressions. "As soon as we saw what was possible with Zero Touch Deployment, we thought, 'This is the only way,'" says Hunt. The Data Impressions team, with the approval of Christine Boening, Product Marketing Manager from the Microsoft Education Team, then worked with Tech Data to secure the pricing that ensured the partners made it through to Tustin's next level of decision making.

Surface passes the test

Tustin Unified School District held what Hunt refers to as a "beauty contest" for its top four device choices. It bought 40 devices from its top four contenders, and for 10 to 12 weeks teachers in the district were able to use the devices in hands-on lessons in their classrooms.

The combination of Surface Pro 6 and Zero Touch Deployment was the obvious choice.

Features such as the rear-facing camera, the touchscreen, and the effortless ability to bring Microsoft 365 applications to life showed teachers what was truly possible within the realm of digital storytelling. While students were enamored with effortless power and the eye-catching design of the Surface devices, teachers were particularly impressed by the possibilities presented by OneNote, Windows Ink, Microsoft Teams, and all the potential uses for rich media.

Importantly for students, the digital storytelling capabilities and Microsoft 365 accessibility options facilitated by Surface accommodate multiple learning styles, while also preparing these students for what work will look like in the modern workplace.

A final meeting between the Tustin District Chief Technology Officer and the head of Microsoft's Education division secured the deal for 8,500 devices. This gave the Data Impressions deployment team a tight two-week window to make good on their promise to deliver a fully configured Surface device into the hands of every student.

A master class in Zero Touch Deployment

"Tech Data went above and beyond what we would typically ask a distributor for," explains Glen Miller, Relationship Manager at Data Impressions. "We essentially asked their team to do a completely backwards delivery process. We went over to their warehouse, picked up the devices, configured them with Autopilot, completed our 'white glove' services, and then delivered them back to Tech Data to be distributed to the schools."

Data Impressions matched its distribution partner in its determination to go above and beyond for the high schools. For one, its white glove services included fully charging the devices, tagging every asset, providing CSV recording and special engraving, fulfilling legal requirements, and then packing the devices back into their cases and packaging them with great care, to avoid any damage.

It didn't stop there. The Data Impressions team worked with Tustin personnel to successfully hand off devices at the three high schools where the devices were being deployed. They worked with the school district and local Microsoft Store to show students and teachers how to sign in and start using Surface and Microsoft 365. Supervisors were provided with a hands-on introduction to Autopilot.

The response was a collective "Wow!"

Says Hunt, "It's not about 8,500 devices—it's about the opportunity to make an impact on at least 8,500 students' lives. It's about redefining what's possible to deliver to the education market. And it's all thanks to this collaboration."

> Tustin has set the bar," beams Hunt, "They've become the district to look at."

The success for this partnership is far from over. Tustin recently tried out Surface Studio 2 and has purchased nine of the devices to use in schools, opening even more doors for the students who are leading the digital classroom.

> That's what we do. Making good impressions is our business!" remarked Jack Mele, Vice President of Sales at Data Impressions.

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